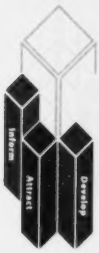
PROGRESS UPDATE 2006-2010

Alberta Industry Workforce Strategies



Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce

Alberta's 10 Year Strategy

Introduction

Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce (BETW) is Alberta's comprehensive labour force development strategy. Released in 2006, this cross-ministry strategy identifies 17 government-led priority actions organized around four themes: Inform – Attract – Develop – Retain. These government actions address labour force issues that impact several industry sectors.

Long term labour force challenges are a shared responsibility of industry sectors, labour groups, professional organizations, volunteer and community agencies, education and training providers, and governments. Each stakeholder plays an important role.

Sector-specific Workforce Strategies were developed between 2006 and 2009 to address the unique labour force challenges and issues found in each sector. Using the four BETW themes, these strategies were developed by Alberta industry stakeholders as a framework to guide industry-led workforce initiatives.

Industry is responsible for the implementation of actions identified in the sector-led workforce strategies. Industry Contributor Groups (ICGs) were formed, for each sector strategy, to steward the implementation of the sector actions. The ICGs consist of the sector organizations which committed to the implementation of the specific actions found in the sector workforce strategies. The Government of Alberta facilitates the efforts of the ICGs.

Sectors experience unique workforce issues and challenges – and they also share commonalities. While the specific actions and approaches each sector takes to address its specific workforce issues may be different and customized to meet the needs of the industry, there is much that can be learned from experiences across sectors.

This update highlights some of the actions taken by industry stakeholders to implement the Workforce Strategies for the following sectors:

- Retail Industry
- Tourism and Hospitality Industry
- Energy Sector
- Manufacturing Industry
- Construction Industry
- Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector
- Forest Industry
- Supply Chain Logistics Industry

The initiatives highlighted provide examples of sectors' innovation and commitment to build the labour force. Many of these actions showcase the spirit of collaboration, partnership and cooperation, illustrating the importance of working together to build Alberta's labour force. The Government of Alberta supported industry in implementing some of the actions in this report by providing partial funding for the industry-led projects.

The industry workforce strategies, along with the BETW strategy, are available at **www.employment.alberta.ca/betw.**

Inform

*The **Inform** theme focuses on increasing access and improving information to support informed decision-making on the part of employers, workers, youth entering the workforce and individuals considering employment in each sector.*

Common Challenges

All sectors stated labour force data is often fragmented, dated, difficult to find or not detailed enough. They expressed the importance of improving the quality of labour market information (LMI) to aid industry and employers in effectively conducting workforce forecasting and planning activities.

Another common challenge identified was low public awareness and understanding of the nature, scope and type of work found in the various industry sectors. The Industry Workforce Strategies identify the need to better inform youth, career influencers and other prospective employees on various benefits of working in a particular industry such as the diversity of career paths, working conditions, and education/training opportunities.

A number of sectors feel the public viewed their sector negatively and this perception was impacting the attraction and recruitment of workers to their industry. These sectors indicated action was required to better educate the public on their industry's environmental performance and job stability.

Every sector stressed the importance of reducing duplication and inefficiencies in activities by sharing resources and best practice information; coordinating action on common issues and collaborating on workforce initiatives.

Activity Highlights

Labour Market Information

- The Petroleum Human Resources Sector Council of Canada (Petroleum HR Council) *Labour Market Information Forecasting Framework* generates up-to-date LMI over the medium to long term (2020) for core occupations across industry sectors. It provides the key foundation for developing workforce strategy and labour supply solutions for the upstream petroleum industry. The Petroleum HR Council's LMI helps 1) companies plan successful retention, recruitment, and workforce development strategies, 2) governments make policy and program decisions regarding immigration strategies, labour adjustment programs, and skills and training strategies, and 3) education and training institutions and organizations plan for content, enrolment and training. It also assists job seekers in planning their careers and career practitioners/guidance counsellors in making career recommendations. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council)

- The *Construction Workforce Forecast* is an annual outlook of the demand and supply for select construction and heavy industrial turnaround trades in Alberta. The forecast is developed by industry and provides projections for multiple years. The forecast also contains a graph that shows labour demand for Alberta industrial construction projects greater than $100 million.

This information is useful for individuals making career choices and very valuable for firms planning major projects. Information can be accessed at **www.constructionforecasts.ca**. (**Construction** – ACA, COAA, CSC)

- The Petroleum HR Council *Short Term Human Resource Trends* report outlines current labour market issues and trends within the upstream petroleum industry and is determined through quarterly web surveys of both small and large companies. The survey report provides timely, qualitative information that industry, government and supply stakeholders can capitalize on to address short-term workforce issues. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council).

- The Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC) has developed an online, interactive *LMI Toolbox* specifically targeting the Supply Chain Logistics (SCL) sector. The site enables the user to drill down into labour market information at the occupational level for specific geographic locations – province-wide, regionally or a particular urban centre. Data is available on 26 occupations common in the sector. This provides a unique source of LMI for this industry and can be accessed through the CSCSC web site at **www.supplychaincanada.org**. (**Supply Chain Logistics** – CSCSC)

- Tourism and Hospitality industry compensation surveys provide current, regional wage information, helping employers understand changing labour market conditions and make appropriate compensation decisions. The surveys, conducted by Tourism and Hospitality industry associations, provide more localized, up-to-date wage rate information than is otherwise available. Due to the specificity of the data, the information can be used to help estimate the prevailing wage rate used in the determination of Labour Market Opinions for the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program. (**Tourism & Hospitality** – AHLA, CRFA)

Career Information and Tools

- All sectors have increased their presence and participation at career fairs and tradeshows to promote employment opportunities within their sector.

- *Choose Your Future in Oil and Gas* is an online self assessment tool that helps job seekers find their appropriate occupation of interest. The interactive quiz asks a series of questions based on personal interests and work environment preferences and when completed, provides a customized list of career options. As one of the many features of the Careers in Oil and Gas website, **www.careersinoilandgas.com**, the tool helps to attract new entrants to Canada's oil and gas industry and provides them with the information they need to make informed career choices. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council, Enform, CAPP, PSAC, CAODC, SEPAC, CEPA, CAGC)

- The Retail Council of Canada (RCC) developed the *Job Rocket* which is a one-stop web portal for jobs in the retail sector. Here candidates can bank a resume online, apply directly to advertised jobs, view career maps, and discover the various education options available for a career in retail. The site is designed to appeal to youth through fun graphics and easy-to-read interactive content. The site also features sections on environmental employer practices, corporate community involvement, and work/life balance. **www.jobrocket.ca** (**Retail** – RCC)

- The Construction Sector Council (CSC) developed an *Aboriginal Construction Careers* website to provide aboriginal communities information on the range of careers in Canada's construction sector. It was specifically designed to reach out to Aboriginal communities and is intended to increase the numbers of Aboriginal Canadians in the construction workforce. **www.aboriginalconstructioncareers.ca** (**Construction** – CSC)

- The Van Horne Institute (VHI) produced a ten minute YouTube video highlighting green career opportunities in the supply chain logistics industry. This video is targeted at youth who are making career choices and in particular those interested in green careers. The video may be seen at **www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTgHmss8wL4**. (**Supply Chain Logistics** – VHI)

- The Resource Industry Suppliers Association (RISA) *Workforce Connections* project identifies, connects and shares employment related information among wood product industry employers, individuals, related agencies, associations and key partners. The project's objectives are to facilitate 25 career starts, re-directions or matches by identifying current industry job opportunities, conducting workshops to prepare individuals for a career within the wood products industry, and sharing workforce related information with both employers and employees. The project helps to increase understanding and awareness of the forest industry and assist in the attraction of new workers. (**Forest** – RISA)

Sector Branding

- RCC's *Alberta Retail Marketing Strategy* promotes retail as a career to six target groups – youth, mature workers, Aboriginal people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and women returning to the workforce. In-depth research was conducted to develop creative marketing resources that appeal to the unique characteristics of each target group. A strategic goal of the marketing initiative is to expand the image of the industry from a place to get a temporary front-line job to an industry with diverse lifelong career opportunities. (**Retail** – RCC)

- The Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) *Forest Branding and Community Outreach Strategy* creates a strong industry brand through development and implementation of a marketing strategy/outreach program targeted to the youth demographic, specifically high school students and Aboriginal youth. The program showcases how the forest industry offers a wide variety of career choices, a high quality of life and employment, and opportunities to contribute to environmental sustainability. The purpose is to attract and retain a workforce and strengthen the forest community. (**Forest** – AFPA)

- *Alberta is Energy* is a community-building initiative that seeks to raise awareness about the important role that the oil and gas industry plays in the lives of Albertans. Its objective is to engage Albertans about the economic benefits generated by the industry and the environmental and social responsibility demonstrated by the industry on a daily basis. Communication and discussion is encouraged through websites, social and mainstream media, engagement of company employees and town hall-style meetings. Similar activities are planned for other petroleum producing provinces such as Saskatchewan and British Columbia. (**Energy** – CAPP, AEG, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, CAGC, CAODC, CEPA, CME, PSAC, SEPAC)

- The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) has developed the *Responsible Canadian Energy*™ (RCE) program. Built on the achievements of its long-standing Stewardship initiative, RCE is about performance and reflects the oil and gas industry's ongoing commitment to responsible development and continuous improvement in environment, health and safety and social performance. RCE measures results while also providing industry with the tools and guidance for continuous improvement. The focus for 2010 will be on reaching out to industry and stakeholders to ensure the support and participation crucial for success. (**Energy** – CAPP)

Tools for Employers

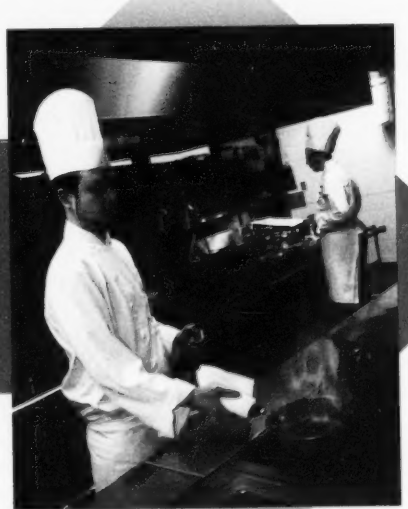
- All sectors have developed sector specific Employer Toolkits to provide relevant labour market information and workforce planning tools for their members.

- The Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) *Best Practices Guide in Environmental Stewardship* provides hoteliers and campground operators in Alberta with best practices to reduce their environmental footprint. It covers a variety of topics (corporate policy, energy, building operations, water, waste, etc.) and a broad range of suggestions from easy-to-implement practices to more in-depth procedural and equipment changes. The guide is specific to the Tourism and Hospitality industry and is in an easy-to-read format with numerous photographs and important tips. This publication can help elevate the image of the sector and assist operators in recruiting workers through their demonstration of environmental values. (**Tourism & Hospitality** – AHLA)

- AFPA developed the *Forest Industry Workforce Program Guide*. This guide provides an overview of employment programs, services and initiatives offered by the provincial and federal governments, as well as the not-for-profit organizations. Forest industry companies can now easily access up-to-date workforce information that is targeted to their needs through this online summary guide and the various website linkages it includes. (**Forest** – AFPA)

- The Alberta Nonprofit Workforce Council (ANWC) has produced *WorkforceConnect* which is an online forum and interactive database of nonprofit workforce initiatives, resources, and best practices from across the province. *WorkforceConnect* helps employers in the nonprofit sector develop, attract and retain their staff. This centralized repository allows organizations to leverage experience, innovation and knowledge from other regions and subsectors, reducing duplication of effort, wasted resources, and unnecessary competition for limited funds. **www.workforceconnect.ca** (**Nonprofit** – ANWC)

- The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) annual *National Buyers and Sellers Forum* brings together over 400 oil sands project owners and potential manufacturing and oil sands suppliers to discuss the latest technology, supply opportunities and procurement requirements for the oil sands. One of the unique aspects of this forum is the creation of formal networking sessions to encourage and foster business alliances between Alberta manufacturers/suppliers and other Canadian manufacturers to meet the supply demands for the oil sands sector. Alberta manufacturers can increase their manufacturing capacity by sub-contracting some of the manufacturing components to other Canadian manufacturers. This approach overcomes the constraint of a tight labour market and supports continued business growth. (**Manufacturing** – CME)



Attract

*The **Attract** theme relates to attracting workers from within and outside Alberta and Canada to meet some of the demand for labour in a given sector.*

Common Challenges

The industry workforce strategies were developed when Alberta's economy was booming and employers across every sector were faced with a shortage of both skilled and lower skilled workers. Every sector tried to attract workers from across Canada. However, employers had difficulty in recruiting workers and their families from other provinces because of challenges related to a fast growing economy such as the availability of affordable housing, high cost of living, and accessibility of social infrastructure (daycare, transit). Attracting and retaining workers was even more problematic in rural and remote communities.

Slow labour force growth coupled with labour shortages in Alberta and Canada meant that many employers had to turn to immigration programs such as the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP), and the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program to meet workforce demands. However, competition for skilled workers in the global marketplace was fierce. In 2006, industry found the immigration and TFW programs unresponsive to their needs (e.g. long processing times; expensive and complex processes). Also, when the workers arrived there was limited capacity to successfully integrate foreign-trained workers into workplaces and communities (i.e. timely credential assessment and recognition; language training).

Labour force pressures have eased as the economy has slowed down. However certain skills and occupations within each sector continue to experience shortages despite economic conditions. As the economy starts to recover all sectors are concerned that wide-spread shortages will re-emerge.

Activity Highlights

Enhancing Worker Mobility

- The objective of the Petroleum HR Council's *Labour Market Transition* project is to achieve labour market efficiencies by matching the skills and experience of displaced workers to in-demand jobs in the petroleum industry. The initiative is focused on developing a strategic and coordinated approach to fill Alberta's oil and gas job vacancies with skilled workers available as a result of downsizing. The Council is currently piloting a transition process to assess specific downsizing situations within the forest industry and collaborate with community stakeholders to support worker transition into oil and gas. The first pilot was conducted in Campbell River, British Columbia, and resulted in the transition of approximately 90 workers permanently laid off from a pulp and paper mill. The second pilot is ongoing with a focus on downsizing forest situations in northern British Columbia. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council)

- The *Alberta Council of Turnaround Industry Maintenance Stakeholders* (ACTIMS) is a partnership of heavy industrial maintenance owners, their contractors and key labour organizations. Their goal is to identify skills shortages and ensure projects are fully staffed with skilled, qualified, experienced workers. The ACTIMS pilot project facilitates craft workforce recruitment and retention for shutdowns/turnarounds at member facilities. Preference is given to Canadian trades people before hiring from outside the country. The ACTIMS structure enables mobility of labour, including TFWs, between member stakeholders (owner, contractor and labour provider participants) to more efficiently respond to fluctuating labour demand. (**Energy** – Shell, Suncor, Syncrude plus their maintenance contractors and the BTA member unions).

Marketing Communities

- A number of Alberta communities including Edmonton, Lethbridge and Calgary have developed websites to provide information about their communities to those who may be considering moving to Alberta. In early 2010, Calgary Economic Development introduced the *Live In Calgary* site (**www.liveincalgary.com**), featuring an interactive photographic journey showing what a dynamic place Calgary is to live. The site is also rich with information about schools, recreation opportunities, cultural pursuits and neighbourhoods. The Edmonton and Lethbridge sites can be viewed at **www.edmonton.com** and **www.lethbridge.ca**. (**Supply Chain Logistics** – CED)

Attracting Immigrants

- RCC is partnering with the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society to develop a *Retail Readiness Program* for new immigrants in the Calgary area. The program will include retail-specific training as well as cultural and language components. After participants complete the training, RCC will work with its member employers to find employment opportunities for the program graduates. This initiative is designed to attract recent immigrants to the retail sector for their first Canadian job, with the goal that many will decide to stay and grow their careers in the industry. (**Retail** – RCC)

- The Tourism and Hospitality industry and the provincial government are working together on AINP categories for the Foodservices industry to facilitate hiring of qualified foreign workers into high demand occupations for permanent and fulltime positions. AINP guidelines are available for the skilled occupations of chef, cook and line cook and for the semi-skilled occupations of food and beverage servers, food counter attendants and kitchen helpers. (**Tourism & Hospitality** – CRFA)

Strengthening Processes

- All sectors were actively involved and collaborated with both the provincial and federal governments to improve the TFW and AINP programs to better meet the needs of the Alberta labour market.

- The Electrical Contractors Association of Alberta (ECAA) is working, along with a network of local American unions, to identify pockets of electrical workers willing and able to come to Alberta when the need arises. By working with organized labour groups it is easier to identify pools of workers who have the needed skills and who can quickly be placed on an Alberta construction project. These American workers are easily integrated into Canadian projects. (**Construction** – ECAA)

Develop

*The **Develop** theme has two components: High Performance Workforce and High Performance Work Environments.*

Develop a High Performance Workforce

The first component focuses on building sector workforce capacity through education and training.

Common Challenges

All sectors agree workforce development is fundamental to building and sustaining a skilled workforce.

As Alberta's workplaces strive to keep up with the pace of change and adopt new technology, the skills requirements for jobs evolve. Critical thinking, project management, problem solving and softer skills like good communication and conflict resolution are becoming basic skills requirements. Industry recognizes there needs to be better collaboration between their sectors and educational institutions to ensure graduates are better prepared to meet the needs of an evolving workplace.

Every sector is concerned employers risk losing valuable organizational knowledge and experience due to the impending retirement of the aging baby boomers. This is especially significant for individuals at the senior and middle management levels.

Considering an aging workforce, coupled with slow growth of new entrants into the workforce, more effort is required to attract and better utilize non-traditional labour pools (i.e. Aboriginal people, women, recent immigrants, people with disabilities) within each sector.

Activity Highlights

Establishing and Promoting Occupational Standards

- A National Accreditation Program was established to recognize supply chain related educational offerings that meet the Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council's (CSCSC) national occupational standards. These standards, developed in partnership with the Canadian Standards Association, reflect industry's needs and educators' best practices. Supply Chain Management is a rapidly changing sector in which industry is taking the lead to determine the educational standards for specific occupations. Employers in the sector will now know that individuals trained for specific occupations will meet the standards irrespective of the institution that provided the training. (**Supply Chain Logistics** – CSCSC)

- The *Petroleum Competency Program* (PCP) is a certification program for specific occupations within the petroleum industry and is based on industry-developed competency standards. A large percentage of the petroleum service sector occupations are non-regulated, so competency

standards are established to ensure industry professionalism and performance. The program certifies workers for occupations in oil and transportation services, snubbing services, well testing services, slickline and cased hole. The PCP fills the need to support training and safe working practices. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council, Enform)

- *Occupational Profiles for the Energy Sector* standardizes position descriptions and classifications to help the industry define recruitment and training requirements. The profiles also promote the energy industry to career seekers and career counsellors by providing a snapshot of the work conditions, education and skill requirements, and career paths for a variety of jobs. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council, ESC)

Partnering to Deliver Industry Training

- Every sector has increased their training capacity by partnering with educational institutions. They implemented innovative training delivery models (e.g. using technology for on-site workplace training) and expanded training centres to accommodate more learners. For example, various training initiatives have been implemented by Building Trades of Alberta (BTA) member unions, Merit Contractors Association (Merit), and the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC).

- The Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (ARHCA) is an active partner with Olds College in its *Heavy Equipment Operator Program*. The ARHCA holds several seats on the Advisory Board for the program and works with the college to ensure the curriculum is responsive to industry requirements. The Association also works with Olds College to assist in the procurement of actual heavy equipment for the students to use and recently donated $25,000 toward student scholarships for the program. (**Construction** – ARHCA)

- The RCC, in partnership with the Academy of Learning, is piloting retail-specific training for sales associates. This program adapts the Canadian Retail Institute professional designation programs for traditional classroom and online delivery. The RCC will work with the Academy of Learning to find work experience placements for students, which are a requirement of the program. By partnering with an education provider, RCC is able to address the need for more formal industry training while leveraging the Academy's credibility, experience and reach to deliver the programs. (**Retail** – RCC)

- The Modular Housing Association (MHA) worked jointly with the Wood Manufacturing Council to develop an online *Management Training Program*. This professional development program is designed for workplace learners and emphasizes the acquisition and practice of management skills. There are no formal academic requirements for entry into the certificate program or the eight individual course modules. Participants are expected to have reasonable communication skills, English language proficiency and basic numeracy skills. Overall program coordination is provided by the Centre for Advanced Wood Processing at the University of British Columbia. (**Manufacturing** – MHA)

- The *Harvard ManageMentor Program* is a self-directed online management development and training resource that is typically only offered through corporations with large workforces. The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) has an agreement to act as an umbrella organization to allow multiple nonprofit groups to access the program and get the same cost discounts previously available only to much larger organizations. CCVO also supplements the program with free local peer learning sessions on selected modules. By centralizing access to educational content, nonprofits of all sizes from across Alberta now have the opportunity to benefit from flexible, affordable, world-class management training. (**Nonprofit** – CCVO)

- CCVO partnered with the MBA program of the Haskayne School of Business to allow nonprofit organizations to draw upon the expertise of advanced MBA students. By connecting students and nonprofits on consulting projects, organizations tap into a pool of managerial, financial and accounting, marketing, and operational management skills, while students gain substantive knowledge and experience in consulting and change management. This initiative not only provides nonprofits with short-term access to talent and skills in high demand, it also increases student exposure and insight into the nonprofit sector as a future long-term career possibility. (**Nonprofit** – CCVO)

Adopting New Models for Training

- In the fall of 2009, Local 488 – United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters (a member of Building Trades of Alberta) opened a new, 55,000 square foot training facility in Edmonton. This centre is capable of providing technical training to 1,500 full time apprentices per year. These programs are no-or-low cost to the trainee and most are delivered during evenings and weekends. Video links enable program delivery at remote sites. Through major investments such as this, labour groups greatly expand skilled training capacity in Alberta. (**Construction** – BTA)

- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) *Mobile Training Centre* delivers on-site training to remotely located workers during their time off and between shifts, through a specially designed trailer facility. The trailer is installed with state of the art equipment, including built-in video-conferencing with satellite. The customized facility has 900 square feet of classroom space, 12 work stations and can accommodate up to 16 students. It is a self contained unit with heating, air conditioning, and a 60,000 watt generator for power. (**Energy** – IBEW)

- AFPA is developing the *Enhancing Power Engineers* in Alberta pilot project to encourage a cooperative and collaborative approach for developing power engineers. The pilot will establish a cross-sector regional cluster that will coordinate administration and training programs for power engineers. Through Northern Lakes College, a Class 1 Power Engineer will be retained to move from site to site and provide on-site dedicated training, encourage upgrading for existing employees and promote youth and Aboriginal recruitment. This pilot involves industrial operators from the forest and oil and gas sectors in the Northwest region of Alberta. The project will enhance the supply of power engineers at all levels to address both immediate and forecasted shortfalls. It will also provide an example of how clusters could be set up in other areas of the province. (**Forest** – AFPA)

Develop and Deliver Targeted Training

- A partnership was formed between the Calgary Workforce Council, the Alberta Council of Disability Services, funders, regional service providers, key stakeholders and post-secondary institutions to focus on leadership development and sustainability. The goal of this partnership is to research future leadership needs, create solutions, and develop a shared plan to implement these solutions within the community disability services sector. This multi-stakeholder approach strengthens collaboration and streamlines activity to improve leadership development in the sector. (**Nonprofit** – ACDS)

- AHLA's *Housekeeping Edge Program* is being designed and piloted to teach the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Housekeeping Room Attendants to all parties of the hotel operation including Management, Supervisors and Room Attendants. This standardized training program is unique in the hospitality industry. Ongoing training is virtually non existent in housekeeping departments yet it is essential to accommodation businesses. The *Housekeeping Edge Program* will be a customizable ready-made program available to any entry level employee and employees with varying levels of workplace English. It will help the hospitality industry cope with the increasing number of inexperienced workers and potentially reduce the high staff turnover rates. (**Tourism & Hospitality** – AHLA)

- The Merit Contractors Association (Merit) *Construction Boot Camp* is a two week training program that provides basic introductory knowledge to individuals seeking a career in the construction industry. The standard program is for individuals 18 years of age or older, and a summer intake targets high school graduates aged 17 years and older. The program is free to participants. Those who complete the program have an opportunity to work for a Merit member company. (**Construction** – Merit)

- Working jointly with the Wood Manufacturing Council, MHA is developing a *Wood Employee Readiness Curriculum for Equity and Target Groups* (WERC). This skills development and upgrading program targets potential labour resources in groups such as First Nations, Inuit, Métis, persons with disabilities and immigrants. The goal is to improve recruitment, retention and career development for members of these groups by providing specific skills to work in the advanced wood products industry (furniture, kitchen cabinets, millwork, etc.). (**Manufacturing** – MHA)

- ECAA partnered with the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Women Building Futures (WBF) and Tradewinds to make the electrician trade more accessible to youth, women and Aboriginal people. These direct partnerships work to address the low participation rates of these groups in the electrical trades. (**Construction** – ECAA)

- The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) report, *Canada's Training Ground*, is based on feedback from independent business owners and measures the contributions of small and medium sized enterprises (SME) to workplace training. The report examines training trends and quantifies the actual investment that firms make in both formal and informal training. It contains current, regionalized information on employer training that is not available anywhere else. Various options for increasing SME workplace training are explored. (**Tourism & Hospitality** – CFIB)

Develop High Performance Work Environments

*The second component of the **Develop** theme focuses on strengthening workplace productivity through development of high performance work environments by improving workplaces and work arrangements, increasing capital investment and technology adoption, and improving business processes.*

Common Challenges

Industry recognizes productivity enhancements can reduce demand for scarce labour and leverage the work performed by existing staff. Adoption of lean thinking to improve workplace processes is considered one way to develop high performance workplaces.

Growing complexity and diversity of work environments further emphasizes the need for training in supervisory, people management and conflict resolution skills to make Alberta's workplaces more productive.

Employers recognized one of the impacts of a worker shortage resulted in hiring some individuals with little industry experience, poor basic workplace skills or in some cases low English language proficiency. The importance of ensuring workplace health and safety for these inexperienced workers is critical for worksite productivity and is a key factor in attracting and retaining the workforce.

Activity Highlights

Strengthening Work Foundational Skills

- All sectors have created initiatives to strengthen and build on existing health and safety programs for their workforce.
- All sectors have participated in the Government of Alberta *Workplace Essential Skills Training* (WEST) pilot projects to improve the level of workplace literacy within their sector. Essential skills include reading text, writing, numeracy, document use, oral communication, computer use, thinking skills, and working with others. Different levels of these skills are required for different jobs.
- The Petroleum HR Council, through its *Workplace Essential Skills Project*, is creating an essential skills awareness strategy for the upstream petroleum industry to help respond to the increasing numbers of inexperienced workers in the energy sector. An employer toolkit is under development to help companies understand the benefits of improving their employees' essential skills and ensure that all workers have the basic skills to perform their jobs safely and efficiently. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council)
- An *Essential Skills Awareness and Assessment Tool* developed for the advanced wood products processing sector is now available to registered users of the Wood Manufacturing Council's website. The site provides assessments of five key essential skills for current and prospective employees. Assessments can be done either online or by using paper copies of the assessment tools. (**Manufacturing** – MHA)

Enabling Technology Adoption

- MHA contributed to the *Technology and Skills Roadmap Project* which helps the Canadian Advanced Wood Processing industry gain a better understanding of technological needs and innovations that can enhance competitiveness. This Technology and Skills Roadmap will also help the industry develop effective human resource strategies and training programs to effectively utilize new and up-and-coming technologies. (**Manufacturing** – MHA)

- The Edmonton Construction Association (ECA) partnered with NAIT and a leading 5D technology provider on two skills development initiatives. One initiative is *Drawing Interpretation 101* and the other is *Building Information Modeling* (BIM). These leading edge training initiatives draw on new technologies to update skill sets and improve productivity. This training addresses changing skills needs, improves productivity and increases training capacity in Alberta. (**Construction** – ECA)

Innovative Work Models

- CME has set up a number of *Lean Consortiums* in the province, designed to strengthen participating firms. Each Consortium consists of up to 16 non-competing manufacturing firms that share best practices, training opportunities and information on Lean implementation in their workplaces. Consortium members benchmark and share initial performance measurement data with each other. Firms then use the data to compare their performance relative to the benchmarks and to measure progress of the process improvements they implement. Participating firms have seen significant improvements in their productivity and competitiveness. (**Manufacturing** – CME)

- Local networks of nonprofit employers are sharing resources such as office space, human resource (HR) functions, HR personnel, and other administrative/support personnel. These collaborations are particularly valuable for small NGOs that would otherwise have no time, resources, or dedicated personnel to develop and carry out formal HR procedures and plans. The Redpoll Centre is an example of a shared service initiative through a partnership between the United Way of Fort McMurray and the Suncor Energy Foundation. The Centre provides seven local nonprofits with a below-market leasing arrangement, including communal spaces and equipment, shared IT support and a shared administrative staff role. (**Nonprofit** – Various Organizations)

- The Alberta Nonprofit Workforce Council (ANWC) was formed in June 2009 to act as a collaborative platform, convener and facilitator for the nonprofit and voluntary sector to address workforce issues. The creation of the Council is a significant addition to the structure for the sector, connecting nonprofit organizations, sub-sectors and regional networks across the entire province. The Council gives the nonprofit sector a unified voice for cross-collaboration with government and other sectors. (**Nonprofit** – ANWC)

Retain

*The **Retain** theme relates to enhancing sector attractiveness so that workers – including mature workers, immigrants, Aboriginal Albertans and those who may experience difficulty maintaining employment – remain engaged in the sector.*

Common Challenges

Every sector is concerned about the aging workforce and the risks employers face in losing valuable organizational knowledge and experience due to the impending retirement of baby boomers. This is especially significant for individuals at the senior and middle management levels. Sectors are also looking at ways to retain mature workers and trying innovative programming that supports transitioning into retirement or offering rewarding post-retirement careers.

Creative attraction and retention incentives as well as strong human resources practices are identified as ways to improve workplace attractiveness and retention.

Sectors acknowledge workplaces are more diverse with different cultural backgrounds, under-represented groups and multi-generations working side-by-side and the impact this has on different workplace values and expectations. This will require workplaces to respond to the different needs and expectations to create welcoming, respectful and inclusive workplaces.

Activity Highlights

Supporting Welcoming Workplaces

- Developed by the Petroleum HR Council, *Draw the World into your Workplace* is an informative resource tool to assist employers in developing outreach strategies and activities to attract and retain a diverse workforce. The booklet offers oil and gas sector employers pre-recruitment, recruitment and retention strategies directly targeting six distinct labour pools – youth, Caucasian males, women, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and visible minorities. This action works towards diversifying the oil and gas industry's workforce to meet the growing need for skilled employees. (**Energy** – Petroleum HR Council)

- The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations' (ECVO) *Welcoming Workplace Pilot Project* is developing and testing a training model designed to strengthen the capacity of organizations in the nonprofit sector to attract, integrate and retain employees from under-represented groups (seniors, youth, immigrants, and Aboriginal people). Employer workshops, peer mentoring and one-on-one coaching will support HR professionals as they participate in the program and implement changes to HR policies and practices. Sector Gatherings will provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and learnings with other organizations on increasing diversity in nonprofit workplaces. A facilitator's guide and tool kit will be developed to enable other groups to replicate the process. (**Nonprofit** – ECVO)

- *Respect in the Workplace* is a COAA best practices policy model, developed to assist employers in implementing a standard policy on preventing workplace harassment. The goal of the sector is to foster respectful workplaces and ensure that "every person who walks on a construction site knows what is considered to be acceptable behaviour". (**Construction** – COAA)

- MHA was involved in the development of a Virtual HR Department. This joint project between five sector councils was undertaken to update and expand an existing web-based tool to assist small and medium enterprises to handle the most important aspects of HR management within their firms. Subscriptions are available for industry to use the Virtual HR Department. (**Manufacturing** – MHA)

Engaging Older Workers

- CFIB's *Small Business and Older Workers Report* provides the results of a survey of small and medium sized enterprises about their experience in hiring and retaining older workers. The perspective of independent business owners is profiled through the survey findings, with consensus of the positive benefits older workers bring to the workplace. Over 75 per cent of employers appreciate the experience, qualifications, strong work ethic and loyalty that older workers bring to the workplace. The report explores ideas to improve the participation rate of older workers. (**Tourism & Hospitality** – CFIB)

- The Electricity Sector Council (ESC) completed a research study, *Succession Planning Best Practices and Tools for the Canadian Electricity and Renewable Energy Sector*. The report highlights findings from research reviews, key industry interviews, focus group results and surveys plus an online coaching/mentoring toolkit is available to help organizations and employees develop coaching skills as an important first step in the succession planning process. The comprehensive report not only details best practices but also identifies the difficulties that are often faced when implementing best practices. Succession planning helps to ensure there are highly-qualified successors to fill critical positions and become future leaders. (**Energy** - ESC)

Strengthening Human Resource Practices

- AHLA's *Employer of Choice* (EoC) program aims to raise the standard of HR practices in the Hotel and Lodging sector, through innovative program design and delivery. The program provides feedback and recognition to industry organizations on their human resource practices, through the use of an HR audit tool and employee opinion survey. EoC recipients are recognized at the annual AHLA convention. Employers of Choice are able to attract new workers and retain their star performers. An EoC designation is not only recognized and valued by workers, but customers also see it as an indicator of a superior level of service. (**Tourism & Hospitality** - AHLA)

- *Employers of Choice* is an interactive website citing best practice case studies gathered from employers throughout the Edmonton region on all aspects of labour recruitment and retention. The site offers a search mechanism for employees who wish to work for Employers of Choice and a behind-the scene matching process for employers who wish to learn best practices from each other. Rather than duplicating effort and creating their own employer of choice program,

the Retail industry encourages members to use this existing tool developed by the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. By piggy-backing on a local initiative, the RCC has found a way to help retail employers share success stories, learn best practices and attract quality employees, while conserving effort and resources for other workforce initiatives. (**Retail** – EEDC, RCC).

The HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector developed the *HR Management Standards* tool to support board members, managers and employees in the development and implementation of effective HR policies and practices for nonprofit organizations. Organizations use the online organizational assessment tool to evaluate themselves in relation to each of the standards. They can then read about how the standards can be implemented and follow the links to supporting resources in the HR Council's *HR Toolkit*. The Standards and related resources help organizations evaluate and improve their HR policies and practices, supporting the creation of more structured HR processes. (**Nonprofit** – HRCNS)

COAA owner members, labour groups and other stakeholders are undertaking a pilot study that seeks to develop a better understanding of the causes of absenteeism. This information will help develop better tools for tracking absenteeism and help identify mitigation strategies for the major causes. The pilot will survey workers who have experienced an absence and these surveys will be conducted at a variety of industrial construction sites. A stronger understanding of absenteeism will help employers develop better absenteeism prevention programs and effective mitigation strategies resulting in improvements to the efficiency and productivity of Alberta's industrial construction sector. (**Construction** – COAA)

Conclusion

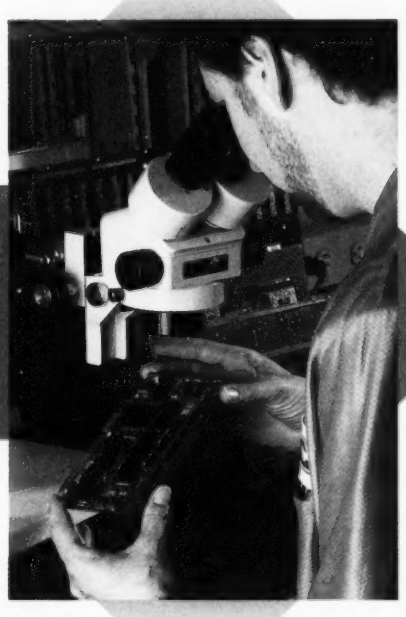
Building and retaining a skilled workforce is a shared responsibility among industry, employers, labour, government and other stakeholder groups. Collaboration among the various parties is critical to ensure Alberta's competitive edge in the global economy. This progress report is one step forward to encourage and enable cross-sectoral dialogue and collaboration.

Through this first industry progress report sectors will be better informed and have a greater understanding when it is more effective and efficient to collaborate on existing and new initiatives. This will help eliminate fragmentation and duplication of initiatives within and across sectors and provide opportunities to learn from each other.

Even though industry was faced with many challenges as a result of the economic downturn, significant progress was made to implement the various workforce strategies. Industry's strong leadership and commitment to addressing workforce challenges is a success worth celebrating.

Sectors moving forward will need to keep the momentum and ensure actions continue to address evolving workforce needs. The very dynamic nature of the global economy requires industry to continually monitor and evaluate progress and make the necessary adjustments to strengthen the individual industry workforce strategies.

By acting collectively Alberta's industry groups can lead the way in developing a workforce that will ensure Alberta's future prosperity.



Acronym Index

Note: *The acronym index lists only the organizations contributing to the activities profiled in this update. Because space does not permit listing every contributor's activities in this document, it must be acknowledged that all contributors have ongoing initiatives supporting their sector's workforce strategy. A complete listing of organizations contributing to Industry/Sector Workforce Strategy priority actions can be viewed within the strategies themselves at* ***www.employment.alberta.ca/betw****.*

Construction Industry

Alberta Construction Association (ACA)
Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (ARHCA)
Building Trades of Alberta (BTA)
Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC)
Construction Owners Association of Alberta (COAA)
Construction Sector Council (CSC)
Edmonton Construction Association (ECA)
Electrical Contractors Association of Alberta (ECAA)
Merit Contractors Association (Merit)

Energy Industry

Alberta Construction Association (ACA)
Alberta Enterprise Group (AEG)
Building Trades of Alberta (BTA)
Calgary Chamber of Commerce
Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors (CAGC)
Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors (CAODC)
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)
Canadian Energy Pipeline Association (CEPA)
Construction Owners Association of Alberta (COAA)
Construction Sector Council (CSC)
Electricity Sector Council (ESC)
Enform Canada (Enform)
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
Petroleum Human Resources Sector Council of Canada (Petroleum HR Council)
Petroleum Service Association of Canada (PSAC)
Shell Canada Ltd. (Shell)
Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada (SEPAC)
Suncor Energy Inc. (Suncor)
Syncrude Canada Ltd. (Syncrude)

Forest Industry

Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA)
Resource Industry Suppliers Association (RISA)

Manufacturing Industry

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME)
Modular Housing Association – Prairie Provinces (MHA)
Resource Industry Suppliers Association (RISA)

Nonprofit Sector

Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS)
Alberta Nonprofit Workforce Council (ANWC)
Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)
Human Resources Council for the Nonprofit Sector (HRCNS)

Retail Industry

Retail Council of Canada (RCC)

Supply Chain Logistics Industry

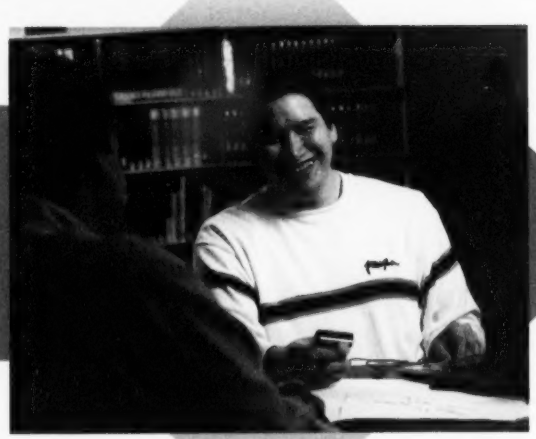
Calgary Economic Development (CED)
Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC)
Van Horne Institute (VHI)

Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA)
Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)
Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA)

Other

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC)



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